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FAC Highlights
Important FACts

The Federal Agencies Committee (FAC) met on February 14, 2002, at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis, Md. Discussion highlights follow.

Update on Nonnative Oyster Aquaculture Issue

Carin Bisland of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided an update on actions within the Chesapeake Bay Program community to address the potential introduction of *Crassostrea ariakensis* (a nonnative oyster) into the Bay. Declining populations of the native species of oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*, within the Bay and other Atlantic Coast estuaries has led to an examination of the role *C. ariakensis* could play in the revitalization of the oyster industry.

Although *C. ariakensis* has proven to be more resistant to diseases than native oyster populations, the introduction of nonnative marine organisms has created widespread concern in the scientific community. The National Academy of Sciences is interested in conducting a study to evaluate the social, ecological and economic risks of introducing the new species to the Bay. The Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Acting Director of the Chesapeake Bay Program have sent letters to the National Academy of Sciences requesting that a study weigh the potential risk of *C. ariakensis* introduction against the *Chesapeake 2000* commitment to increase native oyster populations. The Chesapeake Bay Program will provide $50,000 toward the proposed study.

Anacostia Federal Facilities Impact Assessment

Sue Hughes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented a status report

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Fort Meade Says Goodbye to Its Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinator and Longtime Environmental Steward

By Brian B. Feeney

When Bill Harmeyer came to work at Fort Meade as a wildlife biologist, nobody at the installation thought much about reducing the environmental impacts of building facilities and training soldiers. When he retired 26 years later, last fall, Fort Meade was the location of some of the most innovative watershed management programs and stormwater management systems to be found in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Brian B. Feeney

Bill Harmeyer

He implemented a method of mapping the installation's subwatersheds, using satellite scans for digital elevation modeling, by which he identified the points at which drainage areas converge. He designed and implemented an innovative stormwater management demonstration area that replaces traditionally impermeable surfaces, such as sidewalks, with permeable aggregate material and adds land contouring features that trap and retain stormwater to permit its gradual release. He replaced piping and straight, stone-lined drainage ditches throughout the installation with gently sloping, grass-lined drainage ditches. He replaced traditional, ecologically valueless stormwater ponds with wet meadow stormwater ponds that provide habitat as well as retain storm flows. He expanded riparian forest buffers to slow stormwater flow and trap nutrients and sediments.

Harmeyer's guiding theme for these and many other innovations was to integrate stormwater management, wetlands management, and erosion and sediment control into a holistic ecosystem management system. He said that he got many of his ideas from the water transport methods of the ancient Incas. They used sticks, clay pots and boulders to regulate water flow in their viaducts. "Engineers like to use mathematical and engineering principles to direct water flow. Nature doesn't read that book," he said. He added that too often engineering solutions do what is quick and cheap and fail to consider both environmental impacts and life-cycle costs. He believes that designing with nature is cheaper in the long run but requires people to break their old habits of thinking.

When Harmeyer first came to Fort Meade, he encountered nothing but old habits of thinking. He ran the Forest, Fish and Wildlife Office of the Directorate of Engineering and Housing. A large part of his job was managing more than 8,000 acres of range. He discovered that when the troops used an area for combat simulations, they would leave their barbed wire and earthwork fortifications behind and find a new area to practice the next time. He explained to the Range and Training Office that to make the range sustainable, exercise areas would have to be restored and reused. He wrote a

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